

REMARKS

Claims 3 and 16 have been canceled. Claims 1, 14, and 19 have been amended. Claims 1-2, 4-15, and 17-20 are pending in the case. Further examination and reconsideration of pending claims 1-2, 4-15, and 17-20 are respectfully requested.

Section 102 Rejections

Claims 1-2, 5, 8, 10, 13-15, and 17-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,202,029 to Verkuil et al. (hereinafter "Verkuil").

To expedite prosecution, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the allowed subject matter from claim 3; therefore, rejection of claim 1 is hereby rendered moot. Claims 2, 5, 8, 10, and 13 are dependent from newly amended claim 1, which now contains allowable subject matter, thereby rendering rejections of claims 2, 5, 8, 10, and 13 moot. Independent claim 14 has been amended to include the allowed subject matter from claim 16; therefore, rejection of claim 14 is hereby rendered moot. Claims 15, 17, and 18 are dependent from newly amended claim 14, which now contains allowable subject matter, thereby rendering rejections of claims 15, 17, and 18 moot. Independent claim 19 has been amended to include the allowed subject matter from claim 4; therefore, rejection of claim 19 is hereby rendered moot. Claim 20 is dependent from newly amended claim 19, which now contains allowable subject matter, thereby rendering rejections of claim 20 moot.

In light of the form amendments to the aforesaid claims, each of which now contain allowable subject matter, Applicant respectfully requests removal of the § 102 rejections of claims 1-2, 5, 8, 10, 13-15, and 17-20.

Section 103(a) Rejections

Claims 6-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Verkuil in view of IBM Technical Disclosure Bulletin, Vol. 32, No. 9A, 1990, pp. 14-17.

As noted above, to expedite prosecution, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the allowed subject matter from claim 3; therefore, rejection of claim 1 is hereby

rendered moot. Claims 6-7 are dependent from newly amended claim 1, which now contains allowable subject matter, thereby rendering rejections of claims 6-7 moot.

In light of the form amendments to the aforesaid claims, each of which now contain allowable subject matter, Applicant respectfully requests removal of the § 103 rejections of claims 6-7.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 3-4, 9, 11-12, and 16 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As noted above, the allowable subject matter of claim 3 was incorporated into independent claim 1; the allowable subject matter of claim 16 was incorporated into independent claim 14; and the allowable subject matter of claim 4 was incorporated into independent claim 19. Applicants sincerely appreciate the Examiner's recognition of allowable subject matter in these claims and await allowance of the remaining claims in the case.

CONCLUSION

This response constitutes a complete response to the issues raised in the Final Office Action mailed August 24, 2005. In view of remarks presented herein, Applicants assert that pending claims 1-2, 4-15, and 17-20 are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions, comments, or suggestions, the undersigned earnestly requests a telephone conference.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees, which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to deposit account no. 50-3268/5589-05001.

Respectfully submitted,



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